

Privileged Resolution
Firing of Father Pat Conroy, House Chaplain
April 27, 2018

- Whereas Father Patrick Conroy has served honorably as House Chaplain since May 25, 2011, when he was appointed by Speaker John Boehner in consultation with Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi,
- Whereas Father Conroy had been re-appointed and approved by the House of Representatives on three separate occasions, most recently January 3, 2017,
- Whereas on April 16, 2018, the nation's first Jesuit, and only the second Catholic, chaplain of the United States House of Representatives submitted his resignation before the full House,
- Whereas this resignation was forced by Paul D Ryan, Speaker of the House of Representatives and Members of the House Republican Conference,
- Whereas the Speaker's communications director AshLee Strong said quote "...the decision (to remove the chaplain) was his (Speaker Ryan's)," ¹
- Whereas the lack of notification of his forced resignation, or adequate explanation provided by Speaker Paul D. Ryan is not reflective of the integrity of the House of Representatives,
- Whereas on November 6, 2018, during debate on the GOP tax scam, the Chaplain led an opening prayer asking God to bless Congress and for Congress to "guarantee that there are not winners and losers under new tax laws, but benefits balanced and shared by all Americans,"^[iii]
- Whereas this prayer reflects the core values of many Americans, in particular people of the Catholic faith, including care and concern for the poor and marginalized.
- Whereas, on April 9, 2018, Pope Francis published his third apostolic exhortation entitled "Gaudete et Exsultate" or rejoice and be heard which states that Christians must care for the poor, the sick, and the immigrant.

- Whereas, under the GOP tax scam law, more than 80% of its benefits flow to the richest 1% and corporate special interests, ignoring the needs for struggling men, women and children,
- Whereas this prayer has been reported to be the chief reason for Father Conroy's forced resignation by this Republican Congress,
- Whereas the dismissal of Father Conroy following this prayer shows Republicans' true refusal to embody the values of faith and charity in their legislative work;
- Whereas Father Conroy's forced resignation is concerning to a number of Members of Congress.
- Whereas on April 26, 2018, Rep. Mark Walker, Republican of North Carolina, chairman of the Republican Study Committee, and a member of the selection committee for the next chaplain, said the next spiritual leader of the House should be someone "with a family,"
- Whereas Rep. Walker said, "I'm looking for somebody who has a little age, that has adult children, that kind of can connect with the bulk of the body here, Republicans and Democrats who are going through, back home the wife, the family ... that has some counseling experience ... because what's needed in the body here is people who can sit down with different members, male, female, Democrat, Republican, and just talk about what it is kind of to be up here,"
- Whereas Rep. Walker also said, "Having somebody who's walked in those shoes allows you to immediately relate a little bit more than others."
- Whereas these comments show an implied intention to exclude Catholics from consideration, by virtue of Catholic priests being required to remain celibate;
- Whereas the House of Representatives would benefit from being guided by a chaplain with a commitment to caring about those most in need;
- Whereas the rights of Members of the House of Representatives were undermined when the leader of one party made a unilateral decision to dismiss the Chaplain;
- Whereas this forced resignation has compromised the dignity of the House of Representatives by politicizing the office of the House Chaplain;

- Be it resolved that:
 - A Select Committee shall be created in the House to investigate the motivations and the reasoning behind the forced resignation of the House chaplain;
 - This committee shall be comprised of 6 members, 3 chosen by the chair of the Committee on Ethics and 3 by the ranking member of the Committee on Ethics.